M.O.M. NEWSLETTER - SEPT. 1987

VOL. 6 ISSUE 8

MEETING SCHEDULE:

OCTOBER 5

OCTOBER 19

NOVEMBER 2

NOVEMBER 16

IN THIS ISSUE:

M.O.M

MICROS OF MONMOUTH
P.O. BOX 221
ENGLISHTOWN, N.J. 07726

FIRST CLASS MAIL

M*O*M
Micros of Monmouth

The Newsletter of the
Computer Club of Monmouth, Inc.

The Computer Club of Monmouth, Inc. is a non-profit organization of ATARI computer enthusiasts and users who share a common interest in exchanging information about the programming and operation of the ATARI microcomputer system.

The club meets at the Manalapan High School at 8:00 PM on the first and third Mondays of each month. The meeting dates are changed or cancelled when a holiday or foul weather causes the school to be closed.

Neither M.O.M. newsletter or The Computer Club of Monmouth, Inc. is affiliated with Atari Corp or any of the subsidiary companies. All use of the word Atari or the Fuji logo is recognized as a trademark of Atari Corp.

The M.O.M. newsletter solicits from its members reviews, news, rumors, articles, original programs, classified ads, and any other material of interest for publication. All material submitted for publication should be given to the editor at the meetings or mailed to the club address.

The material printed in the M.O.M. newsletter may be freely copied. We request that credit be given to its authors and to M.O.M.. This newsletter is sent to paid-up members of the club and to other user groups on an exchange basis. User groups interested in exchanging newsletters should write to the club address.

The club supports its own Bulletin Board System that is on line 24 hours a day with a special section for M.O.M. members. The BBS is open to all types of computers after a name/address verification.

WHO'S WHO AT MOM

ELECTED OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT	PAUL SACCONE 201-308-1840
VICE-PRESIDENT	BETTY KUBERSKI 201-634-8714
SECRETARY	PHIL PAONE 201-780-0535
PROGRAM CH.	MARC APPELBAUM 201-446-2522
DISK LIBRARIAN 8-BIT	ERIC PLENT 201-938-2473
DISK LIBRARIAN 16-BIT	JOEL FISHER 609-448-5189
DOC. LIBRARIAN	JOHN KRIEG 201-291-3156
CO-EDITOR	NORMAN WERSAN 201-264-4894
CO-EDITOR	IRWIN KAPLAN

SUBCOMMITTIES:

Acting Liaison to Board of Education	FRANK FEZZA 201-446-4027
MOM'S BBS	ERIC PLENT 201-938-6906

EDITORIAL

TO STAY OR NOT TO STAY - THAT IS THE QUESTION

"We are like dwarfs seated on the shoulders of giants .... " so wrote Bernard of Chartres in the twelfth century. It seems appropriate today. If we are loyal we get from our remote sponsor (Atari Corp.) not just our computers, but our expectations and, sometimes, our future as it relates to computing.

Indeed, we have very little that we are not given - Atari dictates what we use and if we stay in the mainstream of computer technology. Therefore, it is absolutely important that at first starting out in the computer world you choose a viable manufacturer. One who will provide technological and programming support; one who will induce other vendors to join in their efforts.

If you bought an Atari computer - 400, 800, 1200, XL, XE, or to some degree a 520 or 1040, you can only be disappointed. Some of this disapointment is related to prior management foibles. But, those guiding the company now have put us Atarians in a terrible predicament. Should we stay with Atari or follow the multitude and go MS-DOS?? (Maybe, just maybe you will see the promised Atari PC before the end of the year. By that time it may be outdated both graphically and price wise.)

So, a great wave of unfriendly feeling is building between Atari owners and Atari Corp. The press is beginning to pick up the frustration felt by Atarians. Promises and discarded intentions are not the way to keep loyalty. A gulf is also building between Atari Corp and Atari users hungry for power, new programs, and MS-DOS compatibility.

Atari club newspapers and membership is declining. Those clubs that exist find comparitively little in the way of new programs or equipment. This can not continue if Atari expects to prosper (exist ?).

If this editorial sounds pessimistic, I intended it to be. I have a huge investment in Atari - mostly time and enthusiasm. I am approaching that crucial time when I need to be reassured Atari is a viable "way" in computing. Reassure me. Let's see some euipment,technology and programming now.

Jack, can you hear me ? ? ?

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Irwin Kaplan
July 1987

Secretary's Report to the Membership

6/1/87 Minutes of M.O.M. Meeting

BUSINESS

Mike Carovillano opened the meeting at 8:20 PM. He announced that the club had received information on an IBM emulator that sells for $89.95. He also had news regarding Compuserve: first, that there are now new PDN numbers that will allow callers to take advantage of local rates, and, second, that Compuserve will be lowering their prime-time rates.

Mike brought to the members' attention a letter to be sent by Micros of Monmouth to Springboard Software regarding their lack of support for Atari 8-bit computers. All the members were asked to sign the letter in show of support for the release of Atari 8-bit versions of their programs.

Mike went over the nominations for club officers that were made at the last meeting. Still needed were nominations for Secretary and President. Mike opened the floor to any new nominations. There were none. Elections will be held on June 15, 1987.

Betty Kuberski then read the minutes of the meeting of 5/18/87.

Jimmy Krutzler announced that he was turning over the duties of M.O.M.'s BBS Sysop to Eric Plent. Eric should have the board up and running in a few weeks. He will give us the new BBS phone number at that time.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Joe Petrillo had a question regarding Peachtree Software's inventory control program (for IBM compatibles).

Gary Crotchfelt had a problem using a hard disk drive with a Hippo Ramdisk on an ST system. Some possible causes and solutions were discussed.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Joel Fischer showed us a number of different programs on a 1040ST. The first was a "Star Raiders" type of game called "Starglider". Joel showed us this one as an example of how digitized sound is being used in ST software.

He then demonstrated "Magic Sac", the Macintosh emulator. Using the emulator, Joel was able to run such Apple programs as MacPaint and MacDraw. The only thing the emulator does not let you do is to read Mac-format disks directly on the ST drive. The programs must be downloaded from a Mac to the ST and copied to disk, either by connecting a null-modem cable between the two computers and using a terminal program, or by using a modem to download from an online source. There should be a drive available soon that will read Mac disks directly.

Joel finished with a demonstration of ARC - a disk file compression program. He showed us the advantages in speed of using a ramdisk when de-ARCing, or decompressing, files. Also, he noted that some programs will run properly in their compressed form, eliminating the need to de-ARC them at all.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of M.O.M. is scheduled for Monday, 6/15/87.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Kuberski
Secretary

Secretary's Report to the Membership

6/15/87 Minutes of M.O.M. Meeting

BUSINESS

The start of the meeting was delayed because of a program in progress in another section of the cafeteria, and the P.A. system was being used. The meeting was called to order at 8:40 PM by Mike Carovillano. Since the elections of club officers was to be held tonight, Mike asked for any new nominations. Candidates for President and Secretary were still needed. Paul Saccone accepted the nomination for President, and Phil Paone accepted for the position of Secretary. Mike read over the nominees for the other positions as well. As there

was only one nominee for each position, no voting was necessary. A motion was made to accept all the nominees for their respective positions, which was seconded and carried by the membership.

The new officers are:

President.....Paul Saccone
Vice-President.....Betty Kuberski
Secretary.....Phil Paone
Editor.....Doug MacArthur/
Norman Wersan assisting
8-Bit Disk Libr.....Eric Plent
ST Disk Libr.....Joel Fischer
Doc Librarian.....John Krieg
Program Chair.....Marc Appelbaum

Also, our new BBS Sysop is Eric Plent.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Herb Frankel had gotten the name and phone number of the Monmouth County Public Relations Librarian, Joyce Smothers. She offered the use of the County Library System's facilities to our club as a meeting place or for holding computer workshops which would be open to the public. This latter suggestion would be quite advantageous to our group as it would give us more public exposure and perhaps attract new members. The club will look into this offer further.

Marc Appelbaum had news of a new 5 1/4" disk drive Atari is planning to release. The XF551 is a double-sided, double-density drive that will replace the 1050, which is out of production. OSS has written a new DOS, called ADOS, fr the new drive.

Joe Petrillo had a complaint about a certain Morristown-area Atari dealer who would not sell the 1050 drive unless the customer bought a whole Atari system. There were some other complaints as well, and Joe suggested that M.O.M. members not patronize this dealer when looking for equipment or software.

Irwin Kaplan told us that there is now a Rev. 2 version of "Backup Master".

Eric Plent announced the new phone number of M.O.M.'s BBS - 938-6906. Eric has four drives connected, one double-density, three single-density, and a 2000+ sector ramdisk for uploads/downloads, online games, various menu selections, etc. The board runs at 300 or 1200 baud, 24 hours a day, and log-on can be ASCII or ATASCII.

Herb Frankel had a question about an optical reader for the 8-bits. Marc A. said Atari was working on one that will interface to their forthcoming laser printer. Gary Crotchfelt recommended the Omni-Reader, which works like a modem to the computer and costs from $150-$200. John Callaghan had heard of a replacement head for Epson printers that optically scans a printed page loaded into the printer and inputs the converted ASCII text into the computer.

John C. had information on "PC Pursuit", which allows unlimited access at off-peak hours to free BBS's around the country. The monthly subscription fee is $25.

DEMONSTRATIONS

There were no demos at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of M.O.M. is scheduled for Monday, 7/6/87.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Kuberski
Secretary

CLONES

It's hard to read the newspapers or computer magazines without noticing the continued offerings of MS-DOS clones at prices $500 to $1000. These computer offer major IBM program compatibility, double floppy disk storage, graphics and monitor - some even include software. One company is advertising a Turbo-XT, 640K Ram, 20Mb hard drive, keyboard, floppy and mono monitor for $795 !!! (Atari where are those PC's ???)

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Irwin Kaplan
July 1987

RAM DISKS

A RAM disk is not a physical device, it is a software program that sets aside an area of memory to act as a disk drive. Once created it can be used as an "ordinary" external disk drive.

Because all I/O takes place in memory the advantages are obvious. No waiting for drive head movements, no disk spinning and fast access to data in storage. Programs that require a lot of I/O for sorting can be speeded up considerably.

RAM disks aso come with some disadvantages. The greatest is loss of memory ... using an area of memory for a RAM disk removes that memory from the operating sysytem. So you must have enough extra memory so that the loss will not be felt when running programs. Another problem is that data in a RAM disk is lost if the computer stops running..it isn't on disk.

The advantages outway the disadvantages. Speed and the ease of entering programs and files stored in RAM are terrific benefits for setting up RAM disks.

Irwin Kaplan

ST SOFTWARE

One of the exciting aspects of owning an ST is the arrival of START magazine and Compute ST, each complete with an accompanying disk. With the START disk each program is arc'd (compressed) and when through uncompressing them you've got three or four disks on hand with exciting programs.

A look at the fall issue of START will explain what I mean. It contained a complete word processor the equal to the Atariwriter we are all familiar with. Although I own a few ST word processors when I found I could do double columns with this 1.75 version of ST Writer I was finally satiated, afterall we've been waiting for an ST version of PaperClip for over a year. The author of this program, Bruce Noonan, M.D., has been working the bugs out of the original port from the 8 bit version. This is the second version printed in START and a version 2 is due in the December issue. This version contains a deadkey which will allow the writer to "get all those foreign vowels". The version 2 will "let you use dialong boxes for selecting printer options, file selection, and global formatting. Further, all menu functions can be selected with the mouse, and warning messages arrive in alert boxes.

The disk contains a 47 page manual and reference guide and a template to put on the keyboard. The program also contains a preview feature, what more could you ask...all for the price of one magazine!

And that aint't all!

Pixel-pro is an exciting program that takes Degas or Neo pictures and digitized pictures and changes the pixels into larger squares similar to the lead in pictures on innovation. The program is called an image processor and contains many easily achieved features to make part or all of your pictures more interesting. Using a program like Flicker (an animation program printed in the summer issue of START) and Pixel-Pro you can capture and animate the changes.

The disk contains a "fully programmable SCIENTIFIC CALCULATOR for the ST". Some of the features include:

"full floating point math, including 10 levels of nested parenthesis.
log, trig and power functions
100 data memories
1000 steps of program memory
full program control, including nested subroutines, label addressing, and much, much more"

In addition the issue contains "Grapher, a Mathematical Functions Plotter", but I haven't had time to disect this one.

A GAME! Brickyard an ST version of an "Old Classic"

Other features and programs which I haven't had time to explore yet.

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ST SOFTWARE

And now it's time to review a recent issue of COMPUTE!'S Atari ST which is equally exciting to receive and use. In this case you don't have to decompress the programs on the disk, but you get 6 issues a year so don't feel cheated.

The October issue just came and it contained a number of interesting programs to review..but before I get to the latest issue I want to mention some exciting programs in previous issues.

The August issue contained an animation program equivalent to the animation program in START. You could draw your pictures and animate them; all this for the price of one issue plus other features. This animation program contained a text feature and the full 512 colors not possible in Flicker. You can intermix the two program drawings since they are both Degas and Neo compatible. I can't praise these two programs enough. I consider them equal or superior to programs costing many times the price of the magazine.

The December issue contained a simple graph program featuring many different graph formats which could be produced very quickly without a PHD in statistics.

Picture Puzzler in the February 87 issue takes a NEO or Degas picture and scrambles it. Different degrees of difficulty can be set to solve the puzzle.

The August issue had a standard type of chess game on the disk and the April issue a modern chess version called Laser chess.

The October 87 issue has a number of interesting programs. STates and Capitals is an educational type of game where you must guess either the state or the capital. You can race the clock and/or see your success rate in percentages.

3-D Edit is a simplified version of the famous CAD-3D. Even though I have Tom Hudson's CAD-3D I found this interesting to work with. The three-dimensional shapes can be rotated and viewed from any angle and saved for use in NEO or DEGAS format.

One of the major programs in the October issue is a program called SuperDOS. "With nearly 70 commands, built-in utilites, and numerous online help screens, SuperDOS provides an extremely versatile alternative to the GEM desktop. It now emulates many MS-DOS commands as well as UNIX commands, and it runs on all ST systyems, color or monochrome." Since I don't program and like the GEM system I'll let someone else comment on this one.

For someone like myself who doesn't have access to Compuserve, etc. getting the magazines with disks gives me an opportunity to get accessories and programs to make my ST a creative, useful and interesting tool.

Norman Marcus